Turpentine and Camphor Industry, State Governments and MP's regarding fast developing crisis taking heavy toll of labour intensive small scale units rendering thousands of workers unemployed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of action taken/proposed to be taken to provide a package of incentives for sustainable growth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) Several representations have been received from trade associations and MP's seeking abolition of import duty on Oleopine resin (OPR). Some states have represented against reduction in the import duty on OPR. Representations have also been received for exempting camphor from excise duty.

(c) The said representations were examined as part of the budget exercise for 1999-2000 and it was decided not to exempt oleopine resin from import duty or exempt camphor from excise duty.

Guns aeized by Customs Authorities

2273. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of guns seized by the Customs authorities since April, 1995 and their disposal;

(b) the Customs sale price of the guns and their market prices category-wise; and

(c) the reasons for fixing so low sale price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) 132 Nos. of Guns/fire arms (including Pistols, Revolvers, Rifles, Shotguns and Air Guns) are reported to have been seized by the officer of the Customs Department, since April, 1995. During the said period, 173 fire arms/guns (including Pistols, Revolvers and Rifles) have been disposed of.

(b) and (c) The customs are presently selling the weapons, on request and availability, to the Members of Parliament only, for their personal safety and these can not be further disposed of. The sale price of fire arms including guns, which is fixed in accordance with the laid down guidelines, vary with the type, model and category i.e. rifle, revolver, pistols etc. and the customs sale prices range between Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 41,000/-. Import of fire arms are restricted and sale of fire arms—where import permitted—is also prohibited. Open market prices of imported guns are not available and hence it is not possible to comment on the degree of difference between the sale price of customs and actual market prices. The pricing policy is, however, under review.

Controlling Government Expenditure

2274. DR. B.B. DUTTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total Central Government expenditure estimated in 1998-99;

(b) what is the percentage increase in total Central Government expenditure in 1998-99 as compared to 1997-98;

(c) whether Government had imposed a 10 percent cut in non-plan expenditure;

(d) whether any cut in plan expenditure was also suggested;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reasons for not controlling Government expenditure?